



OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
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MEMORANDUM FOR GENERAL ERSKINE

From: Colonel Lansdale

Subject: Why Help the Enemy?

From personal talks with officials and from news media, it appears that some of the current thinking in Washington about discussing the Middle East in the proposed U.N. General Assembly meeting is highly dangerous. If this is so, it is obscuring the enemy and his movements from our leaders.

Information on which the above is based indicates that our planning for a General Assembly meeting is being conducted as though we were preparing a case for a court where justice can be obtained. Such an assumption is incorrect. The Russians thoroughly understand this battleground, as a small side diversion where they can bemuse us over the inconsequential while they are quietly winning on the ground in the Middle East, perhaps split us further from our allies, and show the world once again what a clumsy and soft giant the U. S. is. If we could do the same thing to the Russians, then the meeting would be useful; but our thinking and planning is not linked to an action program.

The Russians have not given up their plan to win the world. Thus, what do words without action gain us in this struggle for nations? Have any of our talks, anywhere, since 1945 saved a single nation and its people from being conquered by the Communists? The only nations freed since then have been Greece, South Korea, the Philippines, Guatemala, Iran, and South Vietnam. Action, not talk, saved them. A dozen others were lost.

Let's suppose that we present and prove a perfect case against the Russians for their "indirect aggression" in the Middle East. Will that lose or win friends for Russia in the Middle East, when it becomes clear that Russia helped the Arabs realize deeply emotional aspirations? Will it frighten or fortify our allies and the neutrals elsewhere in the world to realize that the Russians can act with such skill and certainty, and we with such timidity and uncertainty of objective?

On the other hand, once we start pussy-footing around the realities of the situation we find ourselves in--and some of the newly classic errors of "accommodation" are showing up in thinking about the Middle East--we become hopelessly lost. There are staff officials in Washington who believe the simple picture of the U. S. supporting a handful of weak or corrupt officials against an overwhelming, natural tide of Arab nationalism; they have forgotten the "simple" picture of a handful of Chinese Nationalists being supported against an overwhelming, natural tide of "just agrarian reformists" in China--or Kerensky being supported against the Bolsheviks

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earlier. Our enemy, the Russian Communists, are finding Nasser far too useful a tool, and there is far too much evidence of Communist subversive tactics (Syria and Iraq will provide the proven "school solution" in many a Communist classroom in the future) for us to ignore them. Just because we haven't a fully documented, legal case against the Communists, and have been distracted by Nasser, doesn't mean that they have deserted the scene, to "let nature take its course".

We can only win in the Middle East when we undertake a series of political actions to get the majority of people there on our side and help them institute their own governments which so belong to them that no Communist can beguile them into change. Simply recognizing that Nasser has produced and retained large and noisy backing, as in Iraq, is not enough; the Communists can wrest control away from Nasser and his lieutenants when the glow dies down. However, we must recognize that--contrary to the opinions of many of our Middle East "experts"--it is demonstrably possible to have a dynamic, polarizing political concept in the Middle East. We must now seek out, identify, and adopt the more constructive, political precepts which unify the majority--and patiently bring about our own style of revolution in the Middle East, which will belong neither to us nor to the Nasserites nor to the Communists, but to the people in the area.

Once we have such a program initiated and realize the steps by which we can progress, then we can make use of talks with our enemies in bids for world understanding and support.

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